

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method of communicating between a first computer and a second computer, comprising:

identifying a plurality of documents associated with a transaction;
defining an action sequence for the plurality of documents, the action sequence defining actions that are performed on each of the documents and a sequential order of the actions, wherein the first computer can perform a first set of actions and the second computer can perform a second set of actions;
the first computer creating one of the plurality of documents based on the action sequence and based on a relationship between the first computer and the second computer, wherein the relationship comprises the first computer having a process template and the second computer having a copy of the process template; and
the first computer sending the one of the plurality of documents to the second computer, wherein the one of the plurality of documents is validated against the process template before it is sent to the second computer.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5 and further comprising:

checking a version identifier to see if the first computer and second computer include the same version of a process template related to the action sequence;
the second computer requesting a copy of the first computer's process template if the second computer does not include the same version of the process template as the first computer;
the first computer sending the copy of the first computer's process template to the second computer; and
the second computer retaining the copy of the first computer's process template.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 and further comprising:

the second computer sending a second one of the plurality of documents to the first computer, wherein the second one of the plurality of documents is validated against the copy of the first computer's process template before it is sent to the first computer, requesting a copy of the process template if the second computer does not include the same version of the process template as the first computer.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 57 and further comprising:

rendering a document based on a set of rendering rules for each of the documents, wherein rendering comprises making the document viewable to a user and wherein the rendering rules define how each of the documents is rendered in various applications, the various applications including an electronic mail program and a spreadsheet program.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 wherein validating the one of the plurality of documents against the process template comprises validating information entered into the one of the plurality of documents against the process template, and wherein validating the second one of the plurality of documents against the copy of the first computer's process template comprises validating information entered into the second one of the plurality of documents against the copy of the first computer's process template, 5 and further comprising:

defining actions that can be performed on each of the documents, wherein the first computer can perform a first set of actions and the second computer can perform a second set of actions.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein the first computer validates the information entered into the one of the plurality of documents and the second

computer validates the information entered into the second one of the plurality of documents, and further comprising:

~~creating one of the documents based on a relationship between the first computer and the second computer, wherein the relationship between the first computer and the second computer comprises the first computer having a process template and the second computer having a copy of the process template.~~

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the first computer is associated with a supplier and the second computer is associated with a customer, and wherein the first computer is a process template publisher and the second computer is a process template subscriber, and wherein the first computer propagates process templates to the second computer.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 wherein validating the one of the plurality of documents against the process template comprises validating an action on the one of the plurality of documents against the process template, and wherein validating the second one of the plurality of documents against the copy of the first computer's process template comprises validating an action on the second one of the plurality of documents against the copy of the first computer's process template. ~~5 wherein the one of the plurality of documents is validated before it is sent to the second computer.~~

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5-12 and further comprising:

integrating information in each of the documents into an application on one of the first computer and the second computer;

wherein the first computer is associated with a supplier in a customer/supplier relationship and the action on the first one of the plurality of documents is originating; and

wherein the second computer is associated with a customer in the customer/supplier relationship and the action on the second one of the plurality of documents is acknowledging.

14. (Currently Amended) A business network, comprising:

a first computer having a memory including a process template and a plurality of applications, the process template comprising:

- a business entity module defining a structure of business entities;
- an entity action module defining valid actions that can be performed on the business entities; and
- a transaction document module defining transaction documents and creating a corresponding document based on the business entity module and the entity action module; and
- a rendering module defining how each of the transaction documents is rendered in the plurality of applications;

a second computer having a memory including a copy of the process template and the plurality of applications, the second computer and performing actions based on the process template and a relationship between the first computer and the second computer; and

wherein information entered into the transaction documents and actions performed on the business entities are validated against the process template before an exchange between the first and second computers; and

wherein the valid actions that can be performed on the business entities depend upon an identity of the user.

15. (Currently Amended) The network of claim 14, wherein the process template further comprises:

a correlation module defining how each of the business entities are related and recorded in a history;

a version identifier identifying a particular version of the process template, wherein the second computer is adapted to check the version identifier to see if the particular version of the process template is stored thereon and request a new copy of the particular version of the process template if the second computer does not include the particular version of the process template; and

a routing module defining routing rules for each of the transaction documents.

16. (Currently Amended) The network of claim 15, wherein each of the transaction documents includes a reference to the process template, and wherein the references are utilized in tracking and acknowledging the transaction documents.~~the process template further comprises:~~

~~a version identifier identifying a particular version of the process template.~~

17. (Currently Amended) The network of claim 16, wherein the transaction documents are electronic documents exchanged between the first and the second computers, and wherein the transaction documents contain information required to execute a particular action on the business entities.~~second computer is adapted to check the version identifier to see if the particular version of the process template is stored thereon and request a new copy of the particular version of the process template if the second computer does not include the particular version of the process template.~~

18. (Currently Amended) The network of claim 17, further comprising a third computer and a fourth computer, wherein the first computer is a hub server, wherein the second, the third, and the fourth computers are spoke servers, and wherein the hub server propagates process templates to the spoke servers.~~16, wherein the process template further comprises:~~

~~a routing module defining routing rules for each of the transaction documents.~~

19. (Currently Amended) The network of claim ~~14~~,18, wherein the hub server communicates indirectly with the spoke servers through a virtual private network,~~valid actions that can be performed on the business entities depend upon an identity of a user.~~

20-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) The ~~business~~-network of claim ~~23~~19, wherein the plurality of applications includes an email program and a spreadsheet program.

25. (New) The network of claim 24, wherein the valid actions include originating, acknowledging, and preparing.

26. (New) A computer implemented method of communicating between a first computer and a second computer, the method comprising:

- identifying a plurality of documents in a business document definition;
- defining how the plurality of documents are related in a collaboration definition;
- defining how the plurality of documents are integrated with various applications in an application integration profile;
- including the business document definition, the collaboration definition, and the application integration profile in a process template;
- storing the process template on the first computer;
- requesting a copy of the process template from the first computer;
- retaining the copy of the process template on the second computer;
- entering information into one of the plurality of documents;
- validating the information entered into the one of the plurality of documents against the copy of the process template; and
- sending the one of the plurality of documents to the first computer after the information entered into the one of the plurality of documents has been validated.

27. (New) The method of claim 26 wherein sending the one of the plurality of documents comprises:

- specifying a contact in a productivity program; and
- integrating the process template with the productivity program to identify routing information for the contact.

28. (New) The method of claim 27 and further comprising:

- creating a second one of the plurality of documents based on the receipt of the one of the plurality of documents;
- sending the second one of the plurality of documents to the second computer; and
- creating a third one of the plurality of documents based on the receipt of the second one of the plurality of documents.